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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/SA/EX FOR AUSTIN-FERGUSON; DEPT
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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [KWBG](#) [CASC](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: TARGETED KILLINGS, ROCKET ATTACKS
MARK UPSURGE IN VIOLENCE IN WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP: JULY
15, 2005 (1800 HOURS LOCAL)

11. (SBU) Summary: In the West Bank, Israeli helicopters on July 15 fired missiles at a vehicle traveling near Salfit, killing at least two Hamas activists. Meanwhile, in the Gaza Strip, Hamas and PA security forces have engaged in street battles July 14-15, resulting in the deaths of at least two Palestinians and as many as 40 injuries, including several in critical condition. Israeli media reported that an IAF attack killed up to four Hamas activists in central Gaza. Since the evening of July 14, Palestinian militants have fired over 70 rockets and mortars at Israeli targets in the Gaza Strip and inside Israel. A Qassam rocket killed one Israeli civilian and injured another the evening of July 14. In a separate incident, four Qassam rockets near Nahal Oz injured three IDF soldiers. In Gaza City, a large explosion, reportedly detonated in the vicinity of PA President Mahmud Abbas's residence. End summary.

West Bank

12. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Israeli helicopters on July 15 fired missiles at a vehicle carrying Hamas members, killing at least two, near the West Bank town of Salfit.

-- Injury: According to Israeli sources, IDF soldiers operating in Tulkarm on July 14 shot and wounded a Palestinian holding a Molotov cocktail.

-- Clashes/Injuries: According to Palestinian sources, at least 10 protesters, including Palestinians, left-wing Israelis, and international activists sustained injuries from stun grenades and tear gas inhalation during clashes with the IDF. The demonstrators were protesting the construction of the separation barrier near the West Bank settlement of Immanuel.

13. (SBU) ARRESTS/SECURITY:

-- Arrests: Nil.

-- Settler violence: Israeli settlers on July 14 reportedly uprooted and torched olive trees near Qalqilya.

Gaza

14. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths/Injuries: According to the IDF, one Israeli civilian was killed and one injured on July 14 when two Qassams landed on Nativ Ha'asara. Three IDF soldiers were lightly wounded when four Qassams landed near Nahal Oz.

-- Deaths/Injuries: UNRWA reported 21 PA security forces injured, 14 others injured, and two killed in clashes between Palestinian security services and Hamas militants (see "shootings" below). Israeli radio reported 18 injuries and two deaths from the violence. The Palestinian Center for human Rights reported 43 injuries (23 PA, 14 Hamas and 6 civilian) -- three critical -- and three deaths.

-- Deaths: The Israeli press is reporting that IDF helicopters targeted and killed four Hamas activists in the Tel Ahawa area of the central Gaza strip.

-- Injuries: UNRWA reported eight Palestinians were injured in attacks by IDF helicopters (see "air-to-ground missiles" below).

-- Rockets: The IDF reported thirteen rocket attacks on July 14. In addition to the attacks reported above under deaths/injuries, one Qassam was launched at IDF personnel near Sderot, one at civilians in Netzarim, three at civilians near Nissanit, and two at the Erez crossing.

-- Rockets: The IDF reported three rocket attacks in the early morning hours of July 15: one targeting an IDF outpost east of Rafiah Yam and two targeting civilians north of Nahal Oz. There were no known injuries in these attacks.

-- Rockets: UNRWA reported 55 rockets fired overnight: one at Ganei Tal, 19 at Neve Dekalim, one at Tel Katif, one near the eastern border of the middle of the Gaza strip, eight at Netzarim, six Qassams at Israeli villages north to the north and east of the Gaza Strip, seven rockets at Sderot, three towards the eastern Green Line, three at Nissanit, four at Dugit, and two at unidentified targets in the north. Embassy note: many of these are covered in the IDF reports above. The disparity in numbers is due to the fact that the IDF and UN have different reporting periods. In addition, the UN often includes what the IDF deems to be mortar attacks as missiles.

-- Anti-tank Missile: The IDF reported one antitank missile fired on July 15 at an IDF outpost west of Khan Yunis. There were no injuries. UNRWA said the attack took place on Neve Dekalim.

-- Air-to-ground Missiles: UNRWA reported that overnight IDF helicopters fired a total of eight missiles in Gaza: two at the cemetery in Khan Yunis, two missiles at the Al-Rahma Center (Hammas community center), one at a car in the Birka area, one at a workshop in Deir al-Balah, two at the Al Sahwa Center (Hammas community center). The helicopters reportedly also strafed an area north of al-Attrra (Khan Yunis).

-- Mortars: The IDF reported two mortar attacks targeting Israeli civilians on July 14, one at Aley Sinai and one at Netzarim. UNRWA confirmed the Netzarim attack. There were no injuries.

-- Mortars: The IDF reported six mortar attacks on June 15, one targeting Israeli civilians in Gadid, and five targeting IDF soldiers. The attacks against the IDF occurred northeast of Nissanit, seven kilometers northeast of the Kissufim crossing, northwest of Khan Yunis, 50 meters south of Netzarim, and south of Netzer Hazani. There were no injuries.

-- Mortars: UNRWA reported seven mortar shells fired at Morag.

-- Explosive Device: The IDF dismantled one explosive device found on July 14 approximately one kilometer south of Sofa. There were no injuries.

-- Explosion: The UN reported that at 1600 a vehicle exploded in Gaza city just off Beirut Street on the road to the Preventive Security building, located 600 meters from President Abbas's house. killing four passengers. The explosion reportedly knocked out power in part of Gaza City.

-- Shootings: UNRWA reported that a major clash between Hamas and PA forces began at approximately 1830 on July 14 and continues at this point. According to UN accounts, PA security personnel confronted Hamas militants after they had fired two Qassams at the northern settlement block. In an ensuing gun battle near Shaykh Zayid city, five militants were injured, one critically. Later on July 14 two vehicles belonging to PA security forces were reportedly burned near the Bayt Lahia junction. Violence erupted again when PA forces reportedly fired in central Gaza city to prevent a Hamas spokesman from holding an interview with al-Jazeera. PA forces reportedly deployed at Shifa hospital to intercept any Hamas militants wounded in the fight. The UN reported that PA forces moved APCs into Hamas areas on the morning of July 15, sparking clashes near the UNRWA building. UNRWA reported that an APC was destroyed and police took cover in an UNRWA school, where they fired at crowds who attacked them with two explosive devices. Casualty figures are reported above in "deaths/injuries." Israeli radio reported a riot at the Shifa hospital and an attack by Hamas that destroyed a PA police station and four vehicles.

-- Shooting: The IDF reported shooting at IDF soldiers on July 14 north of the Karni crossing. There were no injuries.

-- Shooting: The IDF reported shooting on July 15 targeting an IDF outpost northwest of Khan Yunis. There were no injuries. UNRWA reported that the attack was on Neve Dekalim.

-- Shooting: UNRWA reported that IDF troops in Rafah fired into the Zarub area. There were no injuries.

15. (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- Arrests: UNRWA reported that three Palestinians were arrested by IDF troops while trying to enter Israel north of Sufa.

16. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS/INTERNAL CHECKPOINTS:

-- No Palestinians except those holding Jerusalem ID cards are currently allowed to use the Erez crossing.

-- Israeli radio reported that the IDF has closed roads and checkpoints to trisect the Gaza Strip.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was closed.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers.

-- Karni Terminal was open on July 14. No information is available on July 15.

-- Rafah Terminal was open on July 14 in both directions without age restrictions. No information is available for July 15.

-- No information on Route Four (Salahadeen Road) is available.

-- Kissufim Junction, the main entry point to Gush Katif settlement bloc, was closed to non-residents July 14.

-- No information on the Toufah checkpoint is available.

-- The Abu Houli internal crossing and the Coastal Road area are reported closed.

17. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- Mortar/rocket and shooting attacks continue. The UN reported additional rockets fired throughout the day into settlement blocks and into Israel, resulting in a number of injuries (details as they become known in the next sitrep).

-- UN staff were advised not to move due to fighting in the streets, but were allowed to move to Erez during midday prayers on July 15.

-- The UN reported that some mosques were calling for Hamas to take over the streets following midday prayers.

-- The UN reported that Hamas stated that rocket attacks are in retaliation for the IDF's entry into Tulkarm in the West Bank.

-- The IDF is maintaining a general closure of the Gaza Strip.
PEARCE